

REMARKS

In accordance with the foregoing, claims 1, 10, 45, 48-50, 53 and 54 have been amended. Claims 55 and 56 have been added. Claims 1, 5-14, 28-32 and 38-56 are pending and under consideration. Claims 49-54 are allowed. Claims 7-9 and 30-32 are objected to.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §112:

Claims 45-49 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

It is respectfully submitted that the present amendments overcome the rejection.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103:

Claims 1, 10, 14, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43 and 44 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Siniaguine et al. (U.S. Patent 6,402,843).

Using claim 1 as an example, this claim recites that a plurality of spouts "cause a swirl of fluid within the concave opening." In order to achieve this swirl of fluid, it would have been necessary to properly arrange the spouts. For example, if the two spouts were arranged as shown in Exhibit A (attached), no swirl would result. However, as illustrated in present FIG. 2A, a swirl results when the multiple spouts 2 are properly arranged.

Thus, the Examiner's proposed modification requires more than merely adding more orifices 2 to Siniaguine et al. '843. The proposed modification also requires proper arrangement of these orifices. However, the reference does not teach this arrangement.

Furthermore, as set forth in the attached experimental results and accompanying declaration, the two spout system creates more than a two-fold suction power. Furthermore, because the pressure distribution and flow velocity on the wafer-side surface of the equipment are approximately symmetrical, the attitude of a held wafer is stabilized. Thus, the performance of the present non-contacting conveyance equipment corresponding to independent claims 1 and 10 is unexpectedly superior to that of U.S. '943 to Siniaguine et al.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejections is requested.

Claims 5 and 6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over

Siniaguine et al. (U.S. Patent 6,402,843) as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Siniaguine et al. (6,099,056). Claims 11, 12 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Siniaguine et al. (U.S. Patent 6,402,843) as applied to claim 10 above, and further in view of Siniaguine et al. (6,099,056). Claims 28 and 29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Siniaguine et al. (U.S. Patent 6,402,843) as applied to claim 10 above, and further in view of Olsson et al.

The comments above with respect to claim 1 also apply herein.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER:

Claims 49-54 are allowed.

Claims 45-48 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Based on the foregoing amendments, it is respectfully submitted that these claims are patentable over the cited references.

Claims 7-9 and 30-32 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Based on the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that these claims are patentable in their present form.

NEW CLAIMS:

New claims 55 and 56 are added and supported, for example, at present page 12 and FIGS. 9A and 9B. It is respectfully submitted that these claims are patentable over the cited references.

CONCLUSION:

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.


Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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